

PRIVATE  
REFLEXIONS

A N D

Occasional Meditations,

Together with some

ESSAYS,

MORAL *and* DIVINE.

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By HENRY SCOUGAL, S. T. P.

*Author of the Life of God in the Soul of Man.*

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*Done from an Authentic MS.*

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To which is prefix'd,  
A particular Account of the Author's Life.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN OSWALD, at the *Rose* and  
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M DCC XL.

REFLEXIONS

AND

Occasional Meditations

By

ESTABLISHED

MORAL AND DIVINE



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**T H E**  
**L I F E**  
**O F**

**Mr. Henry Scougal.**

**H**enry Scougal, second son of Patrick Scougal, bishop of Aberdeen, was born, *Jan* 1650. His father designing him for the service of God in the ministry, took the greatest care of him from his infancy, and had the pleasure to observe such a happy inclination in him to piety and virtue, even in his tender years, as answer'd his expectations. He very soon put away childish things, and by shunning the company of those of his own age, shew'd very little fondness for childish amusements. He now began to look into the bible, and took a peculiar pleasure in reading the historical parts of it, curiously inquiring into the nature of the *Mosaic* oeconomy, and wanted to be satisfied, why the *Jewish* sacrifices and other ceremonies were now abolished. This inquiry set him upon prying into the grounds of the christian religion,

gion, and afforded him infinite delight. As soon as he was able to read the latin authors, he was charm'd with the speeches and debates of the *Roman* senate, and was wont to retire with some of the most ingenious of his fellows, to make little orations, debate on several points, and personate the senators. Not only did he love sermons, but take a pleasure in writing down such passages as affected him most.

Such was his ardor for knowledge in religious things, that when clergymen, and other learned and grave company were met in his father's house, he gave the utmost attention to their conversation. Having made himself master of the latin language, he applied to the *greek* and *hebrew*, in both which he made such progress, that they much assisted him in the study of the holy scriptures, on which, he now bestow'd a considerable part of his time. He allotted particular hours for history, and the study of the mathematics.

At the age of fifteen, he entred the university, where he behav'd with great modesty, sobriety and application. He dislik'd the philosophy then taught, and endeavoured after a thorough knowledge of natural philosophy; that philosophy, which has now happily got such footing in the world, and tends to enlarge the faculties. In consequence of this, we may here observe, that when he was yet but about eighteen years of age, he wrote the reflexions  
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and short essays now published ; which, tho' a juvenile performance, not designed for the press, and some of them left unfinished, yet they breathe forth so much devotion, and such an exalted soul, as must convince us, his conversation was in heaven.

As to the third and fourth reflexion, his passion for the sex being founded in virtue and friendship, heightens the character in the disappointment, when it turns and fixes his mind on the highest and loveliest object. Was there ever a better effect ?

In all the meetings concerning the commencements, he was unanimously chosen president, and had a singular deference paid to his judgment. No sooner had he finished his courses, but he was promoted to the regency ; where, he made conscience of his duty in training up the youth under his care, in such principles of learning and virtue, as might render them ornaments to church and state. When any divisions and animosities happened in the society, he was very instrumental in reconciling, and bringing them to a good understanding. He maintain'd his authority among the students in such a way, as to keep them in awe, and at the same time, gain their love and esteem. Sunday evenings were spent with his scholars, in discoursing against vice and impiety of all kinds, and encouraging religion in principle and practice. He allotted a considerable part of his yearly income for the poor ; and many

many indigent families, of whatever persuasion, were reliev'd in their straits by his bounty; tho' so secretly, that they knew not whence their supply came.

Having been a regent for four years, he was at the age of twenty three ordain'd into the ministry, and settled at *Auchterless*, a small village about twenty miles from *Aberdeen*. Here his zeal and fitness for his great master's service, were eminently display'd. He catechis'd with great plainness and affection, and us'd the most endearing methods to recommend religion to his hearers. He endeavour'd to bring them to a close attendance on public worship, and join'd with them, himself, at the beginning of it. He reviv'd the use of lectures, looking on it as very edifying to comment upon, and expound large portions of scripture. And tho' he endur'd several outward inconveniencies, yet he bore it with much contentedness of mind. But as God had design'd him for an eminent station, where he could be of more universal use in his church. He was remov'd from his private charge to that of training up youth for the holy ministry, and the care of souls. In the twenty fifth year of his age he was admitted professor of divinity in the king's college *Aberdeen*, and tho' they were unanimous in their choice, yet he much declin'd a station of such importance, from a modest sense of his unfitness for it. And as he had been an ornament to his other stations of life, so in a particular manner

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he apply'd himself to the exercise of this office. After he had guarded his students against the common artifices of the *Romish* missionaries in making profelytes, he propos'd two subjects for public exercises; the one, of the pastoral care, the other, of casuistical divinity; but there were no debates he was more cautious to meddle with, than the decrees of God: *secret things belong to God, and things revealed, to us and our children.*

We thought this short account of Mr. *Scougal's* life, would be very agreeable to such as had no opportunity of seeing the character drawn of him by Dr. *George Gairden*. The inward dispositions of this excellent man, are best seen in his writings; and the whole of his outward behaviour and conversation, was the constant practice of what he preached: the concurring testimony of several persons who knew him, and are yet alive in *Aberdeen*, assure us of it. How unsuitable then would panegyric be, where the subject was full of humility? and therefore let it suffice to say, that after he began to appear publickly, you see him, as a regent, earnest, at once to improve his scholars in human and sacred letters: as a pastor, he ceased not to preach the word, to exhort, to reprove, and rebuke with all authority: and as professor of divinity, he bestowed the utmost pains to convince the candidates for the ministry, of the weight and importance of that high office; not to be followed for lucre, but purely to promote the worship of God,

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and the salvation of men. Again, if we consider his private life, how meek, how charitable, and how self-denied ? how disinterested in all things, how resigned to the divine will ? and above all, how refined his sentiments with regard to the love of God ? How amiable must he then appear ? how worthy of imitation, and of the universal regret at his death ? In this light we see clearly, that *the memory of the just is blessed.*

And now, we have only to add, that his health began to be impaired by incessant study, and about the twenty seventh year of his age, he fell into a consumption, which wasted him by slow degrees. But during the whole time of his sickness, he behaved with the utmost resignation ; nor did he ever show the least impatience.

When his friends came to visit him, he would say, " he had reason to bless God it was no worse " with him than it was. " *And, says he, when you have the charity to remember me in your prayers, do not think me a better man than I am ; but look on me, as indeed I am, a miserable sinner.* Upon the thirteenth day of June, 1678; he died, in the greatest calmness, in the twenty eight year of his age, and was buried in the *King's College-Church in Old Aberdeen.*

## Inscription on the AUTHOR'S Tomb.

**HENRICUS SCOUGAL,**

*Reverendi in Christo Patris Patricii*

*Episcopi Aberdonensis filius ;*

*Philosophiæ in hac ACADEMIA REGIA,*

*Per Quadriennium, totidemque annis*

*Ibidem theologiæ Professor :*

*Ecclesiæ in Auchterless, uno anno interstiti, Pastor.*

*Multa in tam brevissimo curriculo*

*Didicit, præstitit, docuit.*

*Cœli avidus, & cœlo maturus,*

*Obiit Anno Dom. MDCLXXVIII.*

*Ætatis suæ XXVIII.*

*Et hic exuvias mortalitatis posuit.*

His father, Mr. *Patrick Scougal*, was minister at *Salton*, and afterwards, bishop of *Aberdeen*. He was married to *Margaret Weems*, daughter to a gentleman in *Fife*, by whom he had three sons and two daughters. *John Scougal*, the eldest son, was commissary of *Aberdeen*. *Henry Scougal*, of whom we have already made mention, was the second.

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The youngest son *James*, was made commissary,  
at his eldest brother's death ; which office he sold  
to Mr. *Robert Paterfon*, father to the present com-  
missary of *Aberdeen* : he then went to *Edinburgh*,  
where he was made one of the senators of the col-  
lege of justice, by the title of lord *Whitehill*. *Ka-  
tharine Scougal*, eldest daughter, was married to *A-  
lexander Scrogie*, bishop of *Argyle* ; and *Jean*, the  
youngest daughter, was married to Mr. *Patrick  
Sibbald*, one of the ministers of *Aberdeen*.

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**Private**

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# Private Reflexions

A N D

## Occasional Meditations.

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### REFLEXION I.

*On the sad Report of the Death of a learned and pious Friend,* Novem. 1. 1668.



GOOD God! how are our lives chequered with misfortunes? do not our greatest comforts make way for sad calamities? What were our lives, if not sweetned with converse? and what doth friendship, but expose us as a larger mark for the shafts of misery, where we are often wounded in another person?

The purest crystal is the soonest crackt, while the coarser metal can endure a stroke. That brittle cage was much too narrow, long to inclose a bird, whose soaring wing required a larger volary. Soon did that noble captive presage the ruin of his seral prison, while others doom'd it strong enough to hold out an ordinary tempest. But since it were a selfishness inconsistent with true friendship, (if I may aspire to so levelling a relation) to envy or regret his happy condition, tho' join'd with my greatest loss, I leave him in the sweet embraces of that glorious saint, whose mournful funerals he lately celebrate with many learned tears, and shall reserve a room in my heart for the memory of his singular perfections.

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R. E.

## REFLEXION II.

*On the sight of the foresaid Person whom I had concluded to be dead, Novem. 10. when I had occasion to visit him at his House.*

**O** HAPPY disappointment ! to see him yet alive, whom some days I had buried in my apprehensions.

But did my hasty passion extort the last reflexion ? and may not the welcome frustration of my former thoughts supply me with fresh ones ?

The uncertainty of our intelligence at so small a distance, where we have the advantage of continual commerce, may justly make us suspect those oral traditions, wherewith the *Popish* party would underprop their tottering opinions : such open channels being so exposed to that noxious mire, wherewith ignorance or interest might easily pollute them.

But yet the variety of syrups and electuaries that have so transformed this virtuoso's library into an apothecary's shop, suggest unto me a shrewd suspicion, that the report hath not been altogether destitute of a foundation : yea, even and these who had the happiness and pains of attending him in his violent fever, do inform, that his soul had once retired so closely, as to shun the search of his most loving friends. Or rather, may I say, that not being satisfied with a *Pisgab*-view of the heavenly *Canaan*, she had taken flight over *Jordan*, to spy out the land, from whence she hath, no doubt, *Caleb*-like, returned with, *Let us go up and take it*. Blessed be God, who hath yet a while pent up this heaven-born flame into an earthen lanthorn, from whence we may receive its comfortable influence. RE-

## REFLEXION III.

*Some serious Thoughts, occasioned by the Disappointment of an important Design. Septem. 7.*

**H**OW suddenly is my soul surpris'd by those dismal emotions ! into what depth of trouble am I plunged by the unsuspected defeat of my hopes ! Had my infant desires been strangled in the birth, they, no doubt, should have expired with fewer pangs ; for no sooner was this passion admitted by me, but it seem'd to be authoris'd by some special providence, pointing at, and recommending the design. I look upon, as a great occasion to my present misfortune, that I am destitute of a friend, by whose discretion I might be guided, till the cloud be dispell'd, wherewith my mind is overcast, and in whose bosom I might vent these resentments, which being pent up, do scorch me with the greater heat ; whereby I must have recourse to that pitiful shift, committing my thoughts to paper, which may by chance disclose them, unless I would be at pains to conjure it to secrecy by means of unusual characters.

My best, is to call in the assistance of principles, which religion and morality afford me.

Never had passion so blinded me, as to make me expect absolute satisfaction in the success of that project. I could easily foresee several inconveniencies which must needs have attended it ; nor did I doubt but there lurked a great many more, not to be discern'd before enjoyment. Experience had taught me, that it is the nature of sublunary things to look a great deal fairer before the fruition, when

the distance conceals those many asperities which a nearer approach doth betray; which made me conclude, that patience is no small ingredient in human felicities. Let me then employ the forces of my resolution, which were intended to bear me up in the troubles of that condition I aimed at, in mollifying the resentments of my present loss.

What know I, but this providence, which to my prejudicated fancy, can appear nothing less than the rod of an offended deity, may be intended as a favour, by that God, whose prerogative it is to foresee future events, and who doth often befriend us in the disappointment of our most promising designs: so purblind are we in the pursuit of happiness, that had we the disposal of our own affairs, we should unluckily plunge our selves into inextricable calamities: it is but reasonable we should refer the conduct of our fortunes to infinite wisdom who governeth the spacious world, whereof we, and perhaps all the inhabitants of the inferior globe, make but a very inconsiderable portion.

But whatever might have been the other consequences of what I intended, the difficulty which I find in weaning my desires from it, makes me fear, that after longer acquaintance, it should have gone near to enhance that measure of my affections which is due to no finite object; and I have no reason to complain, if I escape so dangerous a snare, tho' it were by means of harsher dispensations.

Infinite Majesty of heaven, who art ever happy in thy self, take compassion on the works of thy hands; and pity the distractions and calamities, wherewith poor mortals are tossed and turmoiled.

What doth this world afford us, but anxiety in projects, vanity in enjoyments, and vexation in disappointments? *Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble*: my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. O

O Lord, thou alone knowest the present disposition of my spirit, rebuke I beseech thee, the furious tempest; and restore my soul to that calmness and tranquillity, which may capacitate me for the duties of thy service and my calling.

Touch my heart with the sense of thy divine excellencies, and cause me to remember, that any real goodness which is to be found among thy creatures, is but a faint ray, a very small stream, proceeding from the father of lights, and fountain of living waters. O that now at length I may give up with all interest and designs, and may sincerely prosecute the end of my creation; intirely resigning myself to the obedience of thy laws, and disposal of thy providence; and when others are inquiring, *who will shew them any good*, lift thou up the light of thy blessed countenance on me, and make me taste of the joys which are at thy right hand, and the pleasures which endure for evermore.

#### REFLEXION IV.

*Short time after, the Temper of my Soul was such, as prompted me to the following Meditations.*

**I** CANNOT longer admire that variety which I see among the humours and inclinations of Men, since so short a time hath hugely altered the temper of my own, and presented a scene so different from the former.

'Tis not long since I was driven by the violence of unruly desires, and carried with the tides of unbridled passions: so that all the forces of my resolution were scarce able to keep off some dangerous shelve; and now I suffer a calm, not much less troublesome than the late storm. There

There is now no gale to extend my flagging sails ; no design to excite and enliven my dull and unactive spirits. O what a tedious and languishing thing is the life of man, when not actuated by some affection, and directed towards some end.

Doubtless the *Stoicks* shot at rovers, when they prescribed an apathy, as the only felicity of man. Our thoughts, like mill-stones, must be always grinding some grist, and, if destitute of matter, will set the whole frame on fire : nor will they be entertained with the pleasant ideas of impracticable purposes ; these may serve as short divertisements to the fancy, but will not prove a lasting employment to the mind.

It doth therefore nearly concern me, to pitch upon some design, which may deserve the bensal of my affections, and sustain the weight of my soul : and in this attempt, the most promising method seems to be, that by noticing the occasion of my former deviations, and observing the unusual essays of others, I may more warily direct my course, and lay a more solid foundation.

All men pursue happiness, yet most of the world continue miserable. Some place their felicity in an aggregate of such things and circumstances, as either in their own natures, or the way of obtaining them, do mutually resist and oppose one another, and these fall short of their purpose. He must bend his pride and abate of his luxury, who would gratify his ambition ; and he must hazard both fortune and reputation, who abandons himself to pleasure.

Happiness is a thing more simple, or at least more orderly in it's composition, where there is one sovereign good, and all others subordinate to it.

A second error in this matter is, when we place our repose in that which is not any way in our power to obtain ; rendering our happiness obnoxious to all

all uncertain casualties we may meet with. A third is, when we promise ourselves satisfaction in any thing that is disproportioned to the vast capacities of our faculties, being abused by the gaudy appearance of some distant trifles : and this is the mistake, to which most men owe their frequent disappointments. We fondly promise ourselves all satisfaction in this or the other condition of life, and having with much difficulty obtained it, we are as far to seek as formerly. Being in the valley, the top of such a mountain seems to border with the sky, but being arrived at the top, we cannot perceive our distance from heaven any thing lessened by our toilsome travel and climbing, but are farther exposed to the injuries of the weather.

Let me therefore propose some design, so simple that my thoughts be not distracted, so attainable that my mind be not perplexed, so satisfactory that my expectations be not frustrated.

It seems reasonable that I defer so much to that religion under which I was born, as first to survey the method which it recommends, which is, by the rectifying our faculties and regulating our appetites and desires, to exalt our natures, and transform us into that likeness of the divine nature which may render us capable of the nearest communion with the author of our being : and certainly such a noble design as this seems to bid so fair for felicity, that if I miss it here, I may quit hopes of attaining it. I need not parcel out my pains in prosecuting, or my affections in enjoying, the distant and ill coherent parts of a cumulative happiness, if the satisfaction I hope for consist in the right frame of my own soul : nor need I be solicitous about the success, when all depends on the right use of my own liberty. I cannot assure myself of these pleasures, profits and preferments, which make up the whole of sublunary enjoyments ; but I may, by divine assistance,

assistance, attain to that sublime and heroic temper of mind, which may make me despise them, and make me despise these silly souls who are ensnared with them. And least of all need I fear, that the enjoyment be unanswerable to my expectation. There is nothing that we are so intimately conscious to, as our affections and apprehensions ; nor should we be much concerned in the vicissitudes and changes in the world, were it not that in the present circumstances wherein we stand, they have power to stir up pleasant and dismal resentments in our souls. From whence it is clear, that our understanding and will, being rightly composed, and being taken up with the apprehension and love of infinite excellencies, must render competently happy. Let me then direct all my actions towards that scope : and since the design is of too great importance and difficulty to be undertaken in my own strength, let me seriously implore the assistance of that God who is the author and object of my expected felicity.

Glorious God, who art the desire of all the ends of the earth, and who alone can fill and satisfy the vast capacities wherewith thou hast endued the human soul : how widely have I been hitherto mistaken in the proposal and prosecution of my desires ; fondly expecting that satisfaction from trifles, which is not to be expected from any thing below thy self. O that, now at length, the frequent disappointments I have met with, may fully undeceive me ; and since, by a special providence of thine, my mind is much emptied of all secular cares and projects, make me so happy, as to fill this vacancy with something worthy of my heart, and ble to support my soul ; which can be nothing else than serious study, and endeavours to advance it to those heights of perfection it is capable of, by

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contemplating and imitating thine infinite excellencies : and since in this valley of miseries there is no other way to assure me of a lasting tranquillity, than by such a frame and constitution of spirit as is able to bear the shock of the most dismal casualties ; do thou assist and fortify my mind with these principles of reason and religion, which may work me up to an unreserved and intire resignation of my self, and to such an absolute conformity to thy will, as may assure me of obtaining my desires.

## REFLEXION V.

*Occasioned by the Death of a Friend.*

**A**H ! how fondly are the thoughts of men employed in contriving their own accommodation in this world, from which they are frequently called to remove, before they have well taken up their quarters.

My dearest friend, whose interest had put the greatest stop to the purposes, wherein I was once, but-too much concerned, and on whose account I had with reluctancy enough abandoned it, hath now left me to the prosecution of the design, and other worldly interests ; and hath, I am confident, arrived at that regions of tranquillity, that will present him with objects of infinitely greater value. O with what pity or disdain doth that glorious spirit look down on these trifling enjoyments which are so eagerly pursued by this wrangling world ! his mind is no longer darkened, or his understanding cheated, by the gaudy appearance of sublunary things and vanities ; nor his repose troubled by vio-

lent passions and unstable desires: these ardent flames of divine love have quite extinguished all other affections to his fellow-creatures, save that of charity and good-will.

Dear soul! how happy were it for me, could I emulate those virtues, by which thou wert fitted for so excellent heights of felicity! Thus to become thy rival could not but be pleasing to thee, if yet thou hast any knowledge of human affairs.

And thou, O Lord, who hast called home thy servant, from this valley of misery, where we sojourn, to that city of rest, where he is made perfectly happy, by seeing, enjoying, and loving thyself; inspire my soul with such holy resolutions and desires, that I may never set up my rest on this side of *Jordan*, but may always be panting after that heavenly *Canaan*, and that pleasures which are at thy right-hand, and endures for ever: let me never abandon myself to the gratifications of my fond passion, or inordinate humour: make me modest and resign'd in my designs, and thankful in the enjoyments, and patient under disappointments.

## REFLEXION VI.

**E**XPERIENCE hath taught me, that there is no condition, or way of living secure from temptation, or free of trouble. When want of business or company affords me occasion of being much alone, I sometime find my own thoughts the worst company I could have fallen into. He was a wise man who said, that the solitary person was angel or devil: and I am conscious of so little conformity to angelic excellencies, that I may fear the contagion of the worser nature, should I much indulge my solitary humours.

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When I am immured in a chamber, or lurking in a thicket; the walls of the room or the shades of the grove, which confine my sight, cannot restrain my roving fancy. The world breaks through mine inclosure, and vanities invade my retirement. The pleasing idea of some tempting object do frequently sollicit me, making perhaps a stronger impression in my mind than the substances themselves would be able to do; since 'tis certain, worldly things shew finer, winnowed and purified from their adherent imperfections by the activity and power of a luscious imagination; and how airy soever these phantasms are, they carry weight enough to clog my affections, and to immerse them in earthly desires.

At other times, variety of affairs do so throng in upon me, that I am like to lose myself in the croud, and, through frequency of other company, to fall out of acquaintance with my own soul; being forc'd to employ any leisure I obtained, in unbending my mind and recruiting my dissipated spirits.

Besides, in the ticklish station, wherein providence hath placed me, I do frequently meet with such unpleasant passages, as do exceedingly disturb the repose and tranquillity of my mind. I have often resolved to perform duty, without sollicitude about the success, and not to be anxious about these evils which I had not caused, and could not prevent; but I am sometimes entangled in such perplexing instances, that it is hard to ride the marches, and determine where the blame lies: being conscious of the integrity of my intentions, I do many times discover, that more prudence and vigor might have sometimes prevented some of those unhand-some accidents I meet with, which aggravate the trouble and resentments of them; nor can I be altogether unconcerned in those things which fall out  
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By common error, and fault of those in the society wherein I live, altho' myself were not able to redress it.

There scarce passeth any day, which bringeth not something or other that requireth all my patience and resolution : so that I am often tempted to envy the happiness of those who live by the wholesome sweat of their brows, without the anxiety of their spirit and toil of their brain. But when I consider, that not only these poor people, but also the greatest part of the persons I am acquainted with, do look upon my condition as more happy and advantageous than theirs ; and when I remember what a fair opinion I had of this, before I made trial of it, I am forced to apprehend, that others may be as far from quiet and tranquillity as myself ; and therefore conclude, that *man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*

Let me then make virtue of necessity, and labour to strengthen my patience by the frequent occasions I have to exercise it.

O God, by whose infinite power and wisdom the goodly order of the world is upholden and societies are maintained, which else would soon dissolve and ruin, through the corruption of men ; pity the disorder and confusion which infest this society, wherein thy providence hath placed me : convince us that our sins are the cause of all our troubles and vexations ; and make us particularly sensible of those jars and mutual animosities which have a more particular influence upon them. Unite our hearts in the more vigorous prosecution of the common interest of piety and learning. Let no private humour or design put us forward in these unhandsome practices, which have hitherto occasioned us so much misery, and are never to be seconded with better success,

And

And since there is nothing can secure the duty and obsequiousness of students unto us, unless they be touched with some sense of religion and virtue, make us as serious in recommending the one as the other ; yea, so much the more, as all the respect they defer unto us, and all the authority we have over them, ought to be employed for advancing the concern of their souls.

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## REFLEXION VII.

**W**Hen I reflect on the gracious methods and admirable contrivances, wherewith providence seems to woo my affections and court me unto piety ; I find nothing so astonishing, as my industrious obstinacy in the frustration of them. Often have I met with favours beyond my expectation, and have been rais'd above the reach of my ambition, and my unthankful humour, became so fond of the gift, that I seldom took notice of the giver. Often have I met with the checks of severer dispensations, sufficient to stop the career of my sins and follies ; had I not misimproven them, unto the aggravation of my guiltiness, by fretting and discontent.

And now at present (which seems strange) I am wearied with pleasures, and nauseate enjoyments : a short acquaintance with some things, which I lately desired, hath blunted my appetite, and rendered the delight flat and dull. Now of all the desires in the world, this grief of pleasures (as *Herbert* calls it) seemed most proper for bettering the disposition of my mind, as wanting the temptation to a dissolute levity of spirit, which attends prosperity, but can have no place, when we relish not what we possess ; or that dejection, and discontent which accompa-

nieth adversity : but were very unreasonable in a condition where nothing is desiderated, which I could have desired, unless it be that satisfaction I expected thence, where 'tis not to be found.

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## REFLEXION VIII.

**H**APPY is the man, who being fully persuaded that there is an infinite glorious Spirit, eternal, almighty, true, just, and good, who created the world, and disposeth and governeth all things by his power and wisdom, and is infinitely great above all that any creature can conceive ; and that he is to be adored, worshipped, and obeyed in that way which himself hath prescribed in his holy word, in the performance whereof men may attain unto perfect happiness, thro' the merits of Jesus Christ his only son, and by the gracious influences of his holy spirit, and withal being thoroughly convinced of the naughtiness and vanity of other enjoyments, is heartily sorry that he should so long have pursued sinful pleasures, and lived much a stranger unto God and the ways of piety, and therefore resolves instantly to break off that course of sin, and to lift himself under the banner of Christ, to resist the suggestions of satan, the allurements of the world, and his own corrupt inclinations, covenanting with God in some such terms as follows :

First, he intirely and without reservation doth resign himself and all his interests unto God, devoting his soul and all its faculties and operations unto his service, and obedience to his revealed will, resolving to make the glory of God the scope and end of his future undertakings, committing also unto the

the providence of God, all his outward enjoyments and secular interests; depending upon him for his life, health, fortune, reputation and friend, and submitting himself unto his disposal in these, and all other instances; and being ready to part with one or all of them, when God's will or his own duty does require it.

Moreover, he engageth to be more frequent in the duties of God's worship, taking such opportunities of prayer, reading of scripture, receiving the sacrament, and such other duties as his affairs and conveniencies will afford him; taking a daily review of his actions, to repent of the ill, and give God the glory of the good; and assigning some solemn times for humiliation and confession. Likewise, he engageth seriously to study greater humility, meekness, contentedness, chastity, temperance, and watchfulness over all his ways, and against every temptation, shunning all impure fancies and desires, and using some severities as shall be requisite for these ends. Likewise he promiseth to observe the strictest and severest rules of justice towards others; never harbouring any secret malice or envy against them; never speaking or hearing any thing to their disadvantage with complacency, but pitying their infirmities, and so far as he is able, preventing and remedying their miscarriages; that he shall never encroach upon another's right, or covet his fortune, but shall be ready, according to his power, to relieve the necessities of the needy.

That he will study a more dutiful observance towards his parents, greater affections towards his brethren, greater faithfulness towards friends, especially in the instance of giving and receiving reproof and keeping of secrecy; that he will either abstain from marriage, or else propose to himself the right ends thereof, and perform the duties belonging to that condition. Finally,

Finally, that he will be more diligent in the duties of his calling and station, employing his utmost endeavours towards the peace and welfare of that society wherein he lives, and laying himself out in all his capacity to promote the work which God hath put in his hands.

## REFLEXION IX.

*Some Considerations and Directions, for getting and maintaining that Tranquillity of Mind, which is so absolutely necessary to the Happiness of Man.*

**S**O many are the afflictions and dismal casualties whereunto poor mortals are exposed, that he must be a great stranger to the world, that will not conclude with *Job*, *Man that is born of a woman is not only of few days, but also full of trouble*; and this will appear if we consider more fully, him, in his several interests and capacities.

To begin with that, which of all things of the world is nearest to us, I mean our body: to what variety of pains and diseases are we obnoxious? scarce is there any member of our body, but may lodge such maladies as would make our lives a weariness unto us: a stone in the bladder, a gout in the joints, a rheum in the tooth, yea a little dust in the eye, would create us such trouble, as for the time will drown all the satisfaction the earth can afford us. I doubt much, whether the most exquisite that ever human cruelty did invent, do exceed the pains of some natural distempers. And there are few men who leave the world with greater ease than those who suffer violent death, excepting those who dying piece-meal in a lingring consumption, seem  
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to have their souls sucked out of their bodies with a kiss.

But altho' health be requisite, yet it is not sufficient, to make a man happy : yet it is a thing we are little sensible of, that were it not for the experience of sickness, we should put a little rate upon it. We have other interests to employ our thoughts ; and there are few who live so abstractedly from the world, but are concerned in fortune, reputation, and friends : all which make us become a larger mark for the darts of misery. He whom nature hath favour'd with a wholesome constitution, may yet be pinched with poverty, or at least suffer such detriment in his estate, as may sensibly afflict him. And here we must take our estimate from the proportion of every man's quality and charge : so that he may be groaning under want, who possesseth more than might be reckoned a competency for another.

And should a man's fortune swell as big as his desires, his dangers are multiplied according to the number of his relations : the having whereof, if bad, or the loss of them, if good, is to be reckoned among the sharpest of human afflictions. The heart-wounding instances of profligate or ungrate children, undutiful husbands or wives, faithless and unconstant friends, can hardly be conceived by them who are so happy as never to have felt them.

But suppose a man blessed with all the endearments of friendship, having, besides the relations whom nature gave him, some excellent person, whom congruity of humour and other good qualifications has recommended to his choice, by whose sweet society his griefs may be lessened and divided, his joys doubled and advanced : this, I confess, affordeth the greatest satisfaction that frail mortality is capable of. But alas ! how soon may this pleasant gourd, under whose shade he thus solaces himself, be nipt by worms and weather ! how soon may

death cut afunder that close knot which nothing else could ! and then the halfned soul is left to the doleful resentments of so sad a loss ; by which perhaps he paid dear enough for his former enjoyments.

Thus have we discovered some of these woful fountains, from whence arise those anxious perturbations which render us miserable. Hence are our passions like the waves of the ocean, that tumble and swell and make a mighty noise, and dash us against the rocks, till we make shipwreck of our happiness and repose : yet this discovery shall profit us little, unless we can discover some means for mitigating our misery, and shielding us against the shock of adversity. Now since no man hath the disposal of his own destiny, we can expect security from nothing else, than the tempers and dispositions of our own spirits, about the bettering whereof our thoughts should be employed. In vain do we seek to shift our outward condition, like sick persons, while we retain our inward distemper, which is the cause of all our discomposure.

If then we aim at a constant tranquillity, let us fortify our souls with such principles and resolutions, as may enable us to sustain the assaults of our dismal events ; and since we cannot always suit our fortunes to our desires, let us accommodate our desires to the lot which providence allows. I shall propose two expedients which appear most proper and useful towards this end.

The first is, an absolute resignation unto, and dependance upon the author of our being. We must not only look upon God as the supreme, uncontrollable agent who does whatsoever he pleases ; but also as that infinite wisdom and unbiaſſed understanding, that governs and superintends on human affairs, and who rules the world, not as an absolute Lord, so  
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that we should only be sensible of his power, but as a loving father, that we may taste of his goodness. Such considerations as these, will both preserve us from anxiety and solicitude about future events, and also upholds us under many disasters, they make us think it highly reasonable to commit our petty interests unto the disposal of God's providence, making it all our work to secure an interest in his favour, and to observe those methods he hath prescribed to us ; and then if any thing befall us contrary to our hopes and desire, we will yet conclude that God, whose prerogative it is to know future events, may be singularly favouring in the disappointments of our most promising designs, and the cross may be intended as the greatest courtesy.

All history both sacred and civil, furnish us with frequent examples of those whose happiness hath been ushered in with some disaster ; and it is worse if our experience do not afford some such instance. He who should have observed the captivity and imprisonment of *Joseph*, might have been tempted to pity his misery, and accuse providence, until he had discovered how the iron chains that followed him, made way for these golden ones, wherewith he was afterwards adorned.

He is too much self-conceited, who will not sometime trust his prudent friend with the management of his affairs, though therein he make use of a method which were not so pleasing to himself, hoping he hath skill to discern, and love to make the most proper means. But suppose the loss we sustain be such as no other advantage can repair, yet if it help to disentangle our affections from sublunary enjoyments, by convincing us of their vanity and uncertainty, we shall have no reason to complain.

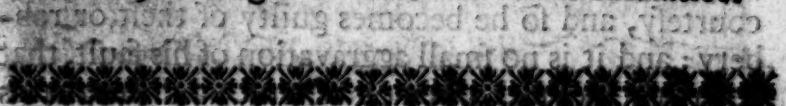
The other expedient that I would propose for the obtaining of tranquillity is, to sit loose of the world,

world, not suffering the stress and banish of our affections, to rest on any thing else than the favour of God, and the assurance of eternal happiness. I do not mean that we should abandon human society, relinquish our business, and reject all pleasures: such indeed is our ordinary practice under crosses, like peevish children, that throw all from them if they have lost any thing. We become fond of affliction, indulge our sorrows, and refuse to be comforted. But that which I would recommend is, such a measure of indifference towards outward things, that the world have not so much interest in our affections, as that to say, I am thine, and thou art mine. If we love any thing extremely and cleave unto it, we must needs be carried along with it, and must bear a part in all it's changes: when 'tis in danger, we must tremble; when it is impaired, we are wounded; when 'tis lost, we have ourselves to seek. Thus must we follow the fortune of worldly things, if we be wedded to them, and our repose is ill secur'd, if it depend on such uncertainties.

Whereas that happy soul, who being fully convinced of the small satisfaction each can afford him, hath raised his ambition to a more noble design, and makes heaven the scope of his desires and intentions, valuing other things according as they are subservient to this design, will be less concerned in all those vicissitudes whereunto human things are exposed: tho' kingdoms should quake, and the earth totter, and heavens fall about his ears, yet shall they not be able to overwhelm his spirit, and disturb that blessed serenity, which the sense of God and the testimony of his conscience affords him. If his fortune be broken, yet his heart is not so; and since he desired a plentiful estate that he might employ it to pious purposes, he doth not grudge to want it, knowing that God doth dispense with him from such services

Services as are without his reach, and will accept of his willingness : and tho' himself want some of these accommodations that others enjoy, yet may he command such a generous temper of spirit, that he shall stand in no need of them.

Should his reputation be shaken and his credit wounded, yet such blows as these do not reach him, nor will he put any rate upon these empty shadows of virtue, so long as he is secure of the substance.



# ESSAYS.

## Moral and Divine.

### ESSAY I.

#### *Of Gratitude, and the Obligations thereunto.*

**T**H<sup>O'</sup> gratitude hath obtained too long possession among all ingenious persons to have it's right called in question ; yet may we, without derogating from the respect which we owe to so noble a virtue, inquire into it's original, and we may perhaps find our selves engaged to it by a stricter tye, than men ordinarily apprehend, who confound it with generosity, and look upon gratitude as a branch of civility ; whereas, if we trace it to the fountain, we may easily descry somewhat of indispensable justice in the matter ; to evidence

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which we must consider, that he who puts a courtesy upon another, doth not so fully alienate the good office, but that he may justly require the same when his necessities call for it. And there is no need of any explicate compact to this effect, since it is always to be supposed that such assistances, are to be retaliated when occasion offers: so he that proves ingrate doth detain from the injur'd person that help to which he acquired a right by his former courtesy, and so he becomes guilty of theft or robbery; and it is no small aggravation of his fault, that it farther includes a breach of trust: a crime that is justly hated, because it deprives mankind of all the conveniencies which might redound to it by a mutual confidence.

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## ESSAY II.

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### *Of Generosity.*

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**I** HAVE sometimes wonder'd, that so excellent a quality should have got no other name than what confounds it with, or at least seems to make it depend upon, nobility of blood; which I then look upon as an empty name, adding nothing of intrinsic worth, although in the constitution of some states it calls for a piece of respect, being a kind of hereditary magistracy: but upon second thoughts, finding that although generosity being not entail'd to noble families, yet it doth ordinarily attend them; I began to apprehend some hidden affinity.

Nobility, without doubt, is nothing else but a long succession of outward fortune; but it were gross to imagine, that such dull materials as silver and gold could influence the soul with noble principles: yet  
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it is certain, that a plentiful estate doth afford occasion of a more liberal and ingenious education, by which their minds are elevate to undervaluing of riches, and such like trash, the enjoyment whereof hath bred a satiety in them ; as also to the prosecution of more sublime designs. Whereas on the other hand, pinching necessity and toilsome labour doth clog and depress the spirits of poor men, confining their thought unto the low and degenerate project of making up a fortune ; which having once attain'd, they become insolent, and often intollerable to their inferiors.

And this diversity becomes more palpable, whereby a continued succession these qualities are propagated ; children usually inheriting the dispositions, as well as the estates of their parents.

The properties of generous persons are chiefly these :

They are surest friends and most placable enemies, disdaining to deceive their confidants, or to oppress the submissive ; they are much more led by the principles of honour, than either of pleasure or advantage, choosing to gratify the higher faculty of the soul, altho' they should thereby disoblige the lower ; and they will not acquire honour itself by any indirect means ; never detracting from the merits of their competitors, nor advancing their own reputation by arrogating the praise of that which is not their own, seeming to set a greater rate on the testimony of their own consciences than the applause of others.

But I do not see well how generosity will make a man quite abandon all self-interest to secure that of another, since in that case he seems by espousing it, to have made it his own, and so the most distressed actions seem immediately to proceed from the neighbour principle of self-love.

## ESSAY III.

*Of Happiness.*

**W**E wonder at the monstrous variety of opinions about the nature of felicity among heathen philosophers, and think they must certainly have shot at rovers, when among 288, only one, and scarcely he, did hit the mark. But we need not be at the pains to look so far back: let us but observe the practices of this present age, we shall find extravagance enough to pity or admire.

It were an infinite labour to prosecute in our consideration all these designs which men propose to themselves to prosecute, as the grand concern of their lives.

In taking a touch of the most remarkable, we begin with sensual pleasures, in which almost every man hath an equal share; nor needs it seem strange, if I say, that in this, the prince hath no advantage above the peasant, since that I may instance in one sense, the first hath his taste no more gratified by the delicacies of court, than the other hath with his homely cheer; and it is much if the squeamishness of a pampered stomach do not make him nauseate the most luscious dainties, which would likely delight his stomach, who is accusom'd to coarser diet, untill a little time had acquainted him with them, and then he would undervalue them as much, if not more, as he did his wonted food.

Now for the enjoyments which only tickle the senses with a short and ignoble delight, and withal do clog and dull the soul, many times leaving it in a melancholy mood: I think any considering man will

will score them out and put them from competition. There is indeed a certain gradation of the senses, wherein, from the touch, the object whereof is most gross and palpable, we may, as it were by steps, ascend as it were to the height, which is more pure, and hath a greater analogy with the intellectual faculty: and it is not unworthy our observation, that the purest and sublimest sense is always seated in the highest parts of the human body.

The next that puts in for happiness, is riches, which we must consider either in themselves, or with relation to us, and so attending their intents. Under the first consideration, their claim is but weak; for why should a man be accounted happy, because his coffers inclose some money, whereof I am as much master as himself: if justice restrain me from meddling with it, avarice doth no less bind up the supposed owner's hands. If we take riches in the second consideration, then they resign their claim in favours of those interests which they are design'd to promote: if they be intended for sensual pleasures, that is already discarded; if for ambition, of that anon. And by the way it may be noted, that riches cannot be used but by alienation, and so they never profit the owner, till they be another's: and if we seriously consider, we shall find that the rich man enjoys no more than his own entertainment, and the pains of dispensing the rest to others; a little will supply the personal necessities, even of the most luxurious, and what is over, must be spent on his domestics whom he must serve in the quality of a steward; and if they be numerous, (as a great estate will require) he finds it a greater business to see to their provision and carriage, than they find it to attend him.

On this account, I think there are few who would willingly undergo the trouble, were it not for a  
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principle of ostentation, to be seen and admired of others ; much like those, who, to be thought fashionable and handsome in their apparel, will pinch and torment their bodies, with more than a *Carthusian* severity : or else they intend to promote the limits of their jurisdiction, by enlarging their families, oeconomy being a kind of government that pleads to the greatest antiquity : and these two designs will lead us to eye the objects of ambition.

And I begin with glory, the desire whereof, tho' it could never deserve the title of virtue, yet it hath often obtain'd it, because it serves to restrain some other vices. The consciences of men are not so debauched, but that they have some reverence for virtue in others, tho' void of it themselves ; and therefore he who would approve himself to the opinion of the greatest part, must shun all palpable enormities. But to come to our purpose, I see nothing in glory or honour which can have any stroke in the happiness of mankind. I shall not speak of external honour, for I think none but a fool could take pleasure in the caresses and complimentary fawnings of his inferiors, did he not imagine that they proceeded from an apprehension of his goodness or greatness ; that is, his will and power of doing good. I think it an argument of a degenerate spirit, to delight in hearing themselves commended for those virtues they want, or excessively for those they have. I must needs confess, I have never been so nearly touched with the sharpest reproof, as I have been by the undeserved applause of others, when my conscience told me, how far I came short of their good opinion. I do not condemn the modest desire of praise ; I think it was the great ingredient in the admired actions of heathens, their *amor patriæ* could not do the turn, had it not been join'd to *laudisque immensa cupido* : but I think it is no solid

lid happiness, which depends on the variable thoughts of a multitude, and if communicate and made known to us, doth undergo the suspicion of flattery, and indignity no ingenious soul can endure; and if hid from us, doth not so much as delight us.

The second object of ambition is power; and before we can admit it to concur to the happiness of man, we must consider its object and end: and to begin with the end, as being *primum in intentione*; I would ask, whether he who looks upon authority over others, as that which will render him happy, resolves to manage it, according to equity or not? if he does not, he is subject to a greater tyranny than that which he would exercise over others, *illis dominatur in summa dominandi libido*; and withal he must know that he is mounted on a saddle, in which it is hard enough for the most equal person to secure himself; and a biased man must needs fall: but if his main design be to have the republic well govern'd, it will not trouble him, tho' providence effectuate it by another hand. None but a fool would envy the pilot the honour of bringing himself and others safe to the harbour. And for the object of human power, the greatest potentate cannot oblige me to change my judgment in the least punctilio; nor can he force my will, tho' he command in some external action, such I mean as are lawful, and punish my disobedience in others, banishing me from the converse of friends, or at most by dislodging my soul, which, as it can but breed small satisfaction to him, is no such intolerable misery to me: I confess it doth not a little amaze the soul, when it is surprized with the rude batterings, at the breaking open of that prison whereunto it was confin'd, being yet ignorant whether it be called for to an enlargement or execution: but this depending on our own carriage, is not in the power of any other.

I do not deny, that there is a certain worth in that honour and obedience that is deferred unto magistrates; and it was a solecism, not in morality only, but also in divinity, to call these titles of majesty, &c. wherewith princes are complimented, the solecisms of a flattering court: for I think the use and profit of all these redounds no more to the sovereign than to the subject, who lives at peace, and enjoys himself securely under the shadow and protection of those who expose themselves to the scorching heat of envy, or stinging insects of wicked tongues, if not to the more dangerous rudeness of those whom equity obliges them to disoblige. And there are not wanting examples of those, who being sensible of those inconveniencies, have retired from public employments, into the quiet of a contemplative life, whose footsteps we shall search in the cell, which we missed in the city.

It is certainly an argument of a pusillanimous and ignoble spirit, for him whom God hath called to the helm of affairs, at the arise of a tempest, to quit his charge, and betake himself to the fly-boat of solitude, and leave the passengers to the mercy of the wind, so long as there remains any hope of safety. But as in the world, so in recluses there are variety of designs. Some give themselves unto the exercises of piety: with these we shall end this discourse, where we shall shew that the end of our lives, and consequently our happiness, consists in the contemplation of divine mysteries. Others there are who content themselves with the search of natural truths, in which I acknowledge more of ingenious satisfaction, than in any sublunary comfort; and it is observable, that *Solomon*, whose great experience had given him a taste of all those good things that are within the sphere of art and nature, when he hath told us, that in other enjoyments, there

there is not only *vanity*, but *vexation of spirit*, is content to say, that reading is a weariness to the flesh : yet whoever considers how little of nature we come to know, and how uncertain that little knowledge is, will hardly think it enough to denominate any man happy.

I shall make use of another general medium, to shew how little satisfaction is to be expected from any of the things of which we have been speaking ; and it is drawn from common experience. You shall see some tradesmen, the height of whose ambition is to carry office in some petty burgh ; you shall see a country clown, whose avaritious aims seem to be bounded in that land which he manures, the property whereof is all he could wish ; you shall see a school-boy, who thinks it were happiness enough to be as knowing as his master : no doubt but all these promise themselves great satisfaction if they can reach their several designs. Mean while the present magistrate may look upon the government of that city as a burden or a disparagement unto him ; the landlord may be complaining of poverty ; and the master, not without reason, of ignorance ; so that these things, which look big at a distance, do appear empty when we approach them.

I shall therefore conclude, that the object of human bliss is somewhat above nature, the enjoyment whereof shall answer or exceed the expectation of his soul, and so fill all the corners of it, that there shall be no more room for future desires ; and that this must be an infinite being may appear from our boundless desires.

The contemplation of those perfections doth most highly advance the glorified spirit, and blesteth it with solid satisfaction. Nor needs it seem strange that meer contemplation should put us in possession of that we behold, since even our sensual pleasures

consist in the perception of external pleasant objects; and all other satisfactions consist in our own apprehensions.

#### ESSAY IV.

##### *Of Platonick Love.*

**I**T was a dull character and rude draught of Platonism, when one call'd it *Venus painted to the waste*; tho' it were to be wish'd, that all those who pretend unto it, did confine themselves in those limits.

But certainly this noble passion is of a more sublime nature, than to have flesh and blood for it's object, or to doat upon clay, because kneaded in a comely frame.

I should rather define it by the affectionate converse and mutual embraces of enamour'd souls: and I am much of the opinion, that did not the uncreated excellencies swallow up all the thoughts of the glorified spirits, and the torments of hell drown those of the damned, there should be more in the other world than in this.

Two things there are which make men suspect the purity of these flames: the first is, that beauty seems to have a great stroke in a Platonick choice; the second is, that this love seldom joineth two of the same sex. These objections being satisfied, I hope it will be a censure severe enough, to call it the noblest frailty of the soul. As for the first: I would have it noted, that Platonicks do not so much concern themselves in the colour of the face, nor are they great admirers of red and white, tho' they do much notice the tracts and figure of the countenance,

tenance, and especially the look of that person whom they affect ; and not without reason, since so much of the humour can be discovered in the physiognomy, and beauty is that in which there are many signs of goodness, according to a late philosopher's description. But if acquaintance once inform him that that the worth of the jewel is nothing proportionable to the curious case, it will soon appear how little respect he desers to external beauty ; and if it should happen, that a person whose good features first commended to his affection, and converse had confirm'd him in the opinion of their affections, should afterwards, by sickness or other accidents, have their countenance spoil'd, it would no ways diminish his unalterable love.

Yet, since for the most part a rugged humour doth betray it self in a distorted countenance, and the sweetness of disposition shines through milder looks, I do not wonder that Platonicks are much in the contemplation of one another's eyes ; these being the only crannies by which imprisoned souls, like *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*, have the freedom of an interview.

But it is a more shrewd objection, that Platonicks for the most part affect persons of different sexes, and as though, were their intentions as pure as their pretensions are, they would equally esteem the converse of a noble soul in whatever body it were lodged. I say, for the most part, diversity of sexes make up that enamour'd couple ; for that it is not always so, I think many instances may testify. And yet a rational account may be given of the phenomenon ; for among other varieties which may be observed among the genius of mankind, some there are whom we call of a masculine temper, others of a feminine ; and from this, some men are called effeminate, and women virago's ; and these tem-

tempers, being thus misplaced, are looked upon as disparagements and defects. The masculine temper hath more of grandeur and majesty, the feminine of sweetness and simplicity; and this discord of humours is requisite to make up the harmony of love. If both souls have the first quality, the concord is too sharp and harsh; if both be of the second, it is too flat and dull.

'Tis an error to think, that an absolute parity and similitude of disposition doth sublimate the affections of the parties above the degree of friendship. In bodies, a perfect likeness will never conduce to a perfect union: if one part of the scroll be concave the other is convex; two globes will never join. If any ask a reason for what I have been saying, I shall willingly confess my ignorance in speculations that concern immaterial beings: and withal I shall add this hint, that men are most disposed to admire and affect those perfections which they want, and all other good things.

So many naughty affections do shelter themselves under the plausible title of Platonicism, that I think myself so far oblig'd to do it right, as to vindicate it from aspersions, by setting down these characters which may distinguish from all pretenders to that name.

And, first, it is purely intellectual, and so far above the gratifying of sense. Secondly, it is not confin'd to one person, but will admit of plurality. Thirdly, it is not impatient of a rival; remembering that goodness is communicative, and that the same person is no less mine, tho' thousands enjoy his comfortable influence. Lastly, it so far prefers the good of the party to it's own satisfaction, as without reluctance to part with the enjoyment of the beloved person, so it be not inconsistent with, or prejudicial to it's happiness.

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To conclude, Platonicism in morality answereth to charity in christianity.

## ESSAY V.

### *The Advantages of Divine Love.*

**M**AN's duty and his happiness consists in the right placing of his love, and this noble affection can have no such suitable, no such advantageous object as God. Love is the only thing which may be called ours, any other thing may be taken from us without our consent, but none can ravish our love: if therefore we would offer any thing to God, let us do it of that which is our own, and if any thing can be counted our own, it will follow as an appendix to that gift: he that giveth his love, giveth with it all that he hath, in so far as he giveth his will, by which he possesseth all things, and it is not possible to refuse him any thing, to whom by love we have given our souls: nay, since it is the privilege of gifts to take the value from the giver, and not to be measured by the event, but by the desire, he who loveth may be reckoned not only to give what he hath, but every thing else, which may make the beloved person happy.

In which sense it is, that one makes bold to say, that he who loveth God, doth give God to himself, by the complacency he takes in his happiness and perfections. But tho' this seems too big an expression, certainly love is the worthiest thing we can give or offer to God, and there is none can so well deserve it.

When this affection is misplaced, it doth often vent itself in such expressions as do point at it's genuine and proper object, and insinuate where it ought

to be fixed : the flattering and almost blasphemous terms of adoration, wherewith lovers court one another, are the language of that affection which was made and design'd for God. As he who is accustomed to speak to some great person, doth perhaps unawares accost another with the same titles he is wont to give him ; so love, which was born to converse with God, being withdrawn from him, doth bestow his honour another way. In a word, that affection which calleth its object a deity, ought to have been placed on him who really is so : the excess and violence of his passion ought to be placed where it cannot be excessive. And indeed so large and unbounded is its nature, that it needs be extremely hamper'd and ill accomodate in any creature ; every thing is so strait for it, but an infinite goodness : hence ariseth that vexation and disquiet which accompanies love when it is not filled with an object, to answer the vastness of its capacity ; hence it is that lovers do hardly brook a rival, and cannot endure that any should approve their affection by imitating it ; they know the narrowness of their goodness which they love, that it cannot suffice two, being indeed too narrow for one. The love of God is free of gall, it regretteth nothing so much as the want of rivals : love is the king of self-dereliction, a wandering out of ourselves, a voluntary death, wherein the lover dieth to himself and all his own interest, not thinking of them or caring for them any more, and so perisheth altogether unless he meeteth with reciprocal affection, for then he is revived, recovers a new life, and liveth in the soul and care of the person whom he loves ; nay, now he begins to mind his own concernment, not because they are his, but because the beloved person is pleased to have an interest into them ; he becomes dear to himself because he is dear to the other : but he perishes quite who loveth

one who either cannot or will not answer his affection. Thus do they hazard their own utter ruin who doat on their own fellow-creature, which may chance to neglect or despise their affection, or whose death may put an end to all their endearments. But happy he who hath lost himself in divine love, where he can never miss reciprocal kindness, for *who shall separate us from the love of God, whose being and goodness are equally eternal.*

They who have made an exchange of hearts by love, get thereby an interest in one another's happiness and misery: this makes love a troublesome passion when placed on earth, where the most fortunate person hath grief enough to marr the tranquillity of his friend; and it is hard to hold out where we are attack'd on all hands, and suffer not only in our own person but in another's. If God be the object of our love, we share in an infinite happiness without any mixture or possibility of diminution; we rejoice to behold the glory of God, and receive comfort and pleasure from all the praises wherewith men and angels extol him; it delights us beyond expression to consider, that he whom our soul loveth is infinitely happy in himself, and that all his enemies cannot shake or unsettle his throne.

Nothing doth more naturally beget affection in us than the love of another; either because having a good opinion of ourselves, we account him a lover of goodness, and therefore a lover of goodness who loveth us; or because the likeness in disposition, which wrought affection in them, effecteth the same in the other; or because the lover doth receive his own image into his soul, and every one loveth his own where he seeth it; or, lastly, because of the gift which the lover makes of himself to the beloved person, who thereby is moved to love that which now is become his own.

[illegible]